

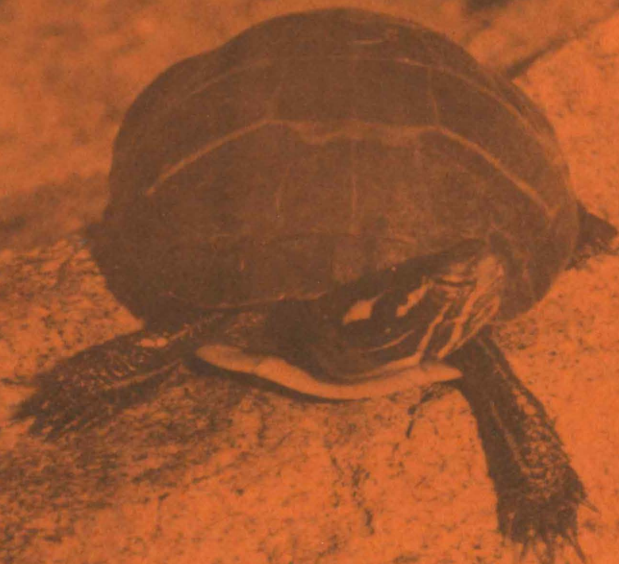
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**JULY  
1968**







# NATURALIST NOTEBOOK

JULY 1968

VOLUME III

NO. 7

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Front Cover: Painted Turtle  
Photo by Dewire

Back Cover:  
Buttonbush--Photo by  
Gardner

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## ACTIVITIES FOR JULY

... Inside back cover.

Published by the

## **THAMES SCIENCE CENTER**

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New London, Connecticut 06320  
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JOHN F. GARDNER--*Executive Director*  
ROBERT C. DEWIRE--*Naturalist*

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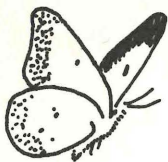
The active support of children and adults in the Science Center, its programs, activities and efforts is earnestly solicited.

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JOHN F. GARDNER  
*Editor*

The Interpretive Museum of 622 Williams Street, New London, Connecticut 06320  
The Peace Sanctuary Nature Preserve At 200 River Road, Mystic, Connecticut 06355

# JULY'S NATURE CALENDAR



SULFUR



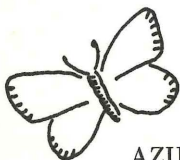
SWALLOWTAIL



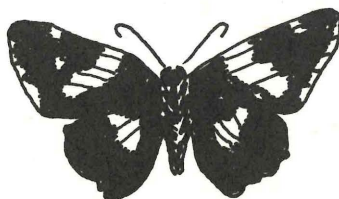
ADMIRAL



HAIRSTREAK



AZURE



SKIPPER

July is the month of butterflies. In woods and fields you can find a great variety of these pretty insects. Although the larger ones are the most readily seen, there are many very small butterflies that are often passed by unnoticed. Two of the most common small butterflies are the Gray Hairstreak and the American Copper. Both of these may be found in field areas. Most people are aware of the tails on the lower wings of the large and beautiful swallowtail butterflies, but very few realize that the little hairstreak also has tails on the lower wings.

The American Copper has deep orange wings with dark spots on them - as pretty as any Monarch Butterflies, but lacking its size. There are many other small butterflies to be found such as the blues and skippers. Next time you go into a field this summer, see how many different kinds of these tiny but beautiful insects you can find.



# JULY'S NATURE CALENDAR

July is the month of animal babies and insects.

July 1... The 183rd day of the year - its end marks the half-way point of this year.

July 3... Lightning Bugs are flashing each evening from now to the end of the month.

July 6... Bats spend the warm evenings in pursuit of insects using their perfect radar systems to hunt the insects down.

July 7... Wood Lilies come into flower in fields.

July 9... The full moon is out tonight. It is called the buck moon.

July 13... Butterfly Weed comes into flower in fields - its bright orange flowers attracting many insects to it.

July 15... The shorebird migration is beginning with the

first sandpipers and plovers arriving at various local beaches and mudflats.

July 16... Monarch Butterflies are seen in many fields - often on Butterfly Weed.

July 20... The woods are full of young birds all out of their nests.

July 22... The northward dispersal of egrets following the nesting season, results in many Snowy and Common Egrets in our marshes.

July 25... Many birds are beginning to raise their second family of the year.

July 28... Polliwogs are changing to frogs in many ponds.

July 30... The buzzing of the cicadas in the trees indicate that summer is more than half over.



# THE CHILDREN'S CORNER *by TRUDY GARDNER*



## The Honey Bee

At the Peace Sanctuary there are many interesting things to see; however I thought I would tell you about a big old oak tree with a good sized hole in its trunk where a colony of honey bees make their home.

The home of the honey bee is called a hive. In the hive are thousands of tiny rooms known as cells or honey combs.

If you could get a good look inside the honey bee hive you would find it a very busy household. There may be as many as twenty thousand bees in the hive and each one has a job to do.

The bees make trips outside of the hive to gather juice from the flowers. The juice is called "nectar" and they use this to help make honey. You are probably wondering how they store this nectar; well, they have a special honey stomach inside themselves. When this stomach gets full, the bee flies back to the hive and puts all the nectar that has been turned into honey into one cell.

For a bee to make one pound of honey it must gather at least two pounds of nectar. In four weeks the bee can gather only about one teaspoon of nectar.

Did you know that honey bees also collect the flower dust called "pollen"? They carry this fine dust on the hairs of their legs, then as the bee goes from one flower to another some of the pollen rubs off. If the bees didn't scatter the pollen, there wouldn't be any orchards and pretty flowers in our gardens.

Honey bees are very good housekeepers. Scientists have discovered that if any large object falls into the hive, the bees will try to get it out. However, should it be too large, they have a way to make a material known as "honeyglue", which they use to cover the object. This then seals the object up so that it will not spoil the honey. In this way the bees always are able to keep the hive clean; even if they can't remove something large that gets into it.

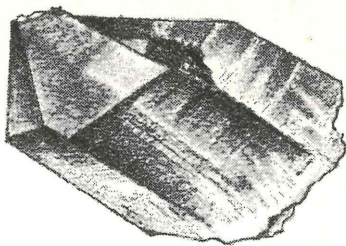
Whenever you go into a store to buy honey you can always be sure that it is real. Man has been unable to make artificial honey. Only bees can make honey and scientists don't know how they do it.

The honey in the hive at the Peace Sanctuary will stay there as food for the bees.



# ROCK HOUNDS

by JERRY THEILER



SMOKY QUARTZ

## CRYSTALS

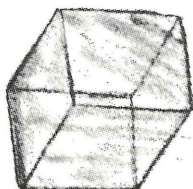
Crystals are flat-sided solids formed as a mineral solution evaporates, or as a melted mineral cools. Often very beautiful crystals form, and for this reason they are known as the "Flowers of the Mineral Kingdom."

Scientists have studied crystals and they put them into many groups. Crystal study can be rather difficult, so we'll just mention a few of the common crystal types.

Some minerals, like galena and fluorite form crystals shaped like cubes. The most common crystal is the six-sided quartz crystal. Minerals like beryl (aquamarine) and corundum (sapphire and ruby) also have six sides.

To grow common salt crystals (cubic), you must dissolve as much salt as possible in a glass container and simply allow it to evaporate. The crystals will grow on the bottom and the low sides of the container.

For a beginner, crystals are clues to identification. For example, if you find a mineral with a cubic crystal it eliminates all but a few minerals and using other characters such as streak, you can identify it.



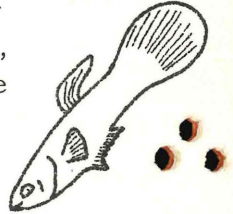
HALITE (salt)

# PET CORNER

by DAVE RICHARDS

## GUPPIES

I am sure that most of you know what a guppy is. They have been kept in aquariums since 1859, when the British used them to eat mosquito larvae which were over-running the swamps. Because guppies were planted in so many different places to destroy the mosquito larvae, we do not know from where they first came.

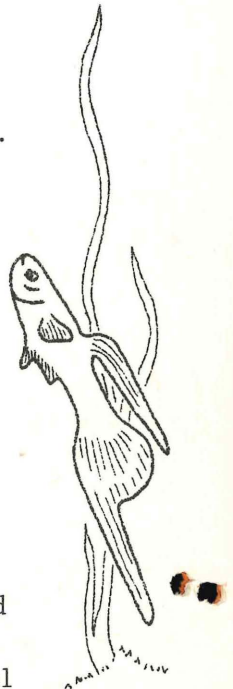


Most young fish are hatched from eggs, but the guppy is a member of a small group of fish whose young are born alive. As soon as they are born they are able to take care of themselves, without help from their parents. They are completely grown by the time they are six months old.

Like other fish whose young are born alive (known as "live-bearers") the guppy parents will eat their young if not separated from the babies at birth. This is nature's way of keeping them down in number.

The wild guppy was originally a very drab, poorly colored fish. Through selective breeding, however, guppies with many different colors and shapes have been developed.

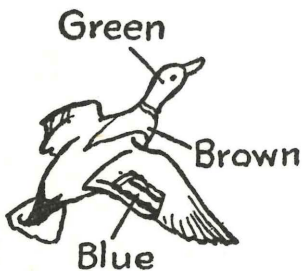
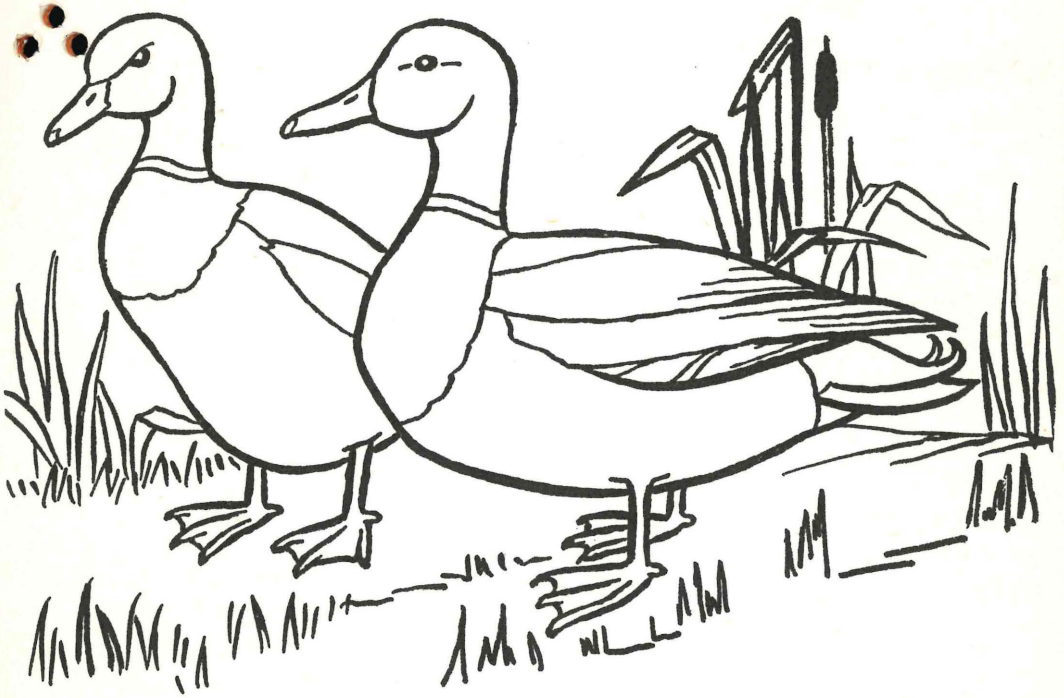
Guppies are ideal for the new or the advanced hobbyist because they are so easy to keep and breed. You would be surprised at what a beautiful addition they would be in your home aquarium.





# MALLARD DUCKS

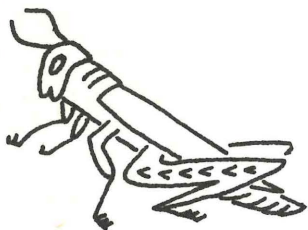
HERE IS A PICTURE OF TWO MALLARD DUCKS  
FOR YOU TO COLOR. YOU MAY SEE THESE  
BIRDS IN THE MYSTIC RIVER ALONGSIDE THE  
PEACE SANCTUARY.



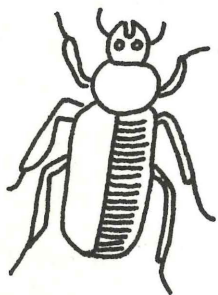
**For You  
To Color**

# MAKING AN INSECT ZOO

by JOHN F. GARDNER



GRASSHOPPER



BEETLE

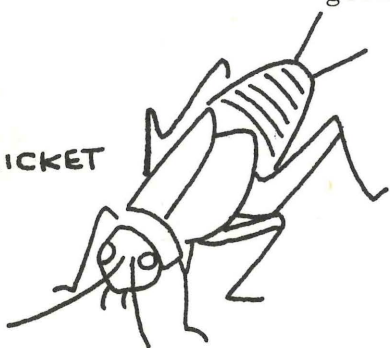
We find many insects during the summer. It is fun to watch them grow and develop. To do this you might want to start an insect zoo of your own.

First make an insect cage. This can be made from a plastic box, a jar, a flower pot, a lamp chimney, or some other container you have around the house. Fill the bottom with some dirt. Top this with some grass sod. Insert a twig or small branch in the grass for the insect to climb on.

Every once in a while sprinkle the cage with water to keep the grass growing.

You will have to feed your insect. It would be very hard to tell you what to feed every insect you might catch. Here are some suggestions for the common insects you might get and keep in your zoo.

CRICKET



REMEMBER: Insects are living things. Keep the cage clean. Feed and water them every day.

Crickets: Feed them bread soaked in water, corn mush, bits of lettuce and once in a while some peanut butter.

Grasshoppers: They will eat the grass in the cage so be sure it grows well.

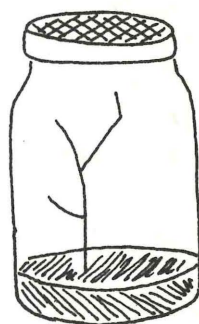
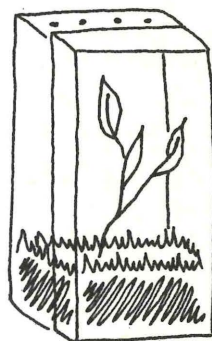
Silk Worms: If you should buy or be given some of these, remember they require a very special diet of fresh mulberry leaves.

Woolly Bear

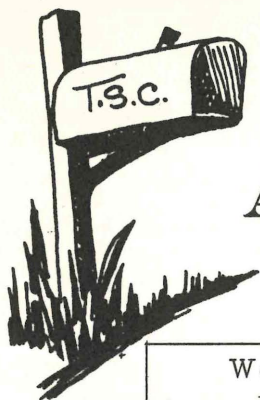
Caterpillars: Will eat the grass or any clover that might be growing in your cage.

Most other insects can be fed the plant on which you find them; except the Praying Mantis, Click Beetles, and the Lady Bird Beetle. These eat other insects and need a special diet.

From: A Book Of Nature Activities by  
John F. Gardner, © 1967...  
Interstate Printers and Publishers  
Danville, Illinois, distributor







## ARTICLES OF ADULT INTEREST

We welcome notice of Conservation activities or problems for inclusion in this section of the Naturalist's Notebook. . . . Please let us know of your local activity so that others may be aware of your efforts and lend their support where possible. . . .

BARN ISLAND. . . . Habitat management work being done at the Barn Island Game Management Area in Stonington this summer includes the building of an impoundment, a little over 2,000 feet long, to create at least one more pond to attract waterfowl. In addition, several areas of thick shrubs and briars have been cleared, in order to create more habitat that will be suitable for ring-necked pheasants.

OSPREYS. . . . Preliminary studies on the egg transferrals between the osprey nests at Great Island in Old Lyme and a colony in Maryland have yielded interesting results. Eight Maryland eggs have hatched to date in seven nests in the Lyme area. Of the eggs taken from Lyme and put in Maryland nests at the same time, only one egg has hatched. This seems to indicate that it is the eggs and not the behavior of the adults that is causing nest failure in Lyme. Further studies are being made and the adults and young of the Lyme colony will be banded as much as possible. Further information on this project will be mentioned in future newsletters.

## AUDUBON SCREEN TOUR: 1968 - 1969 SEASON.....

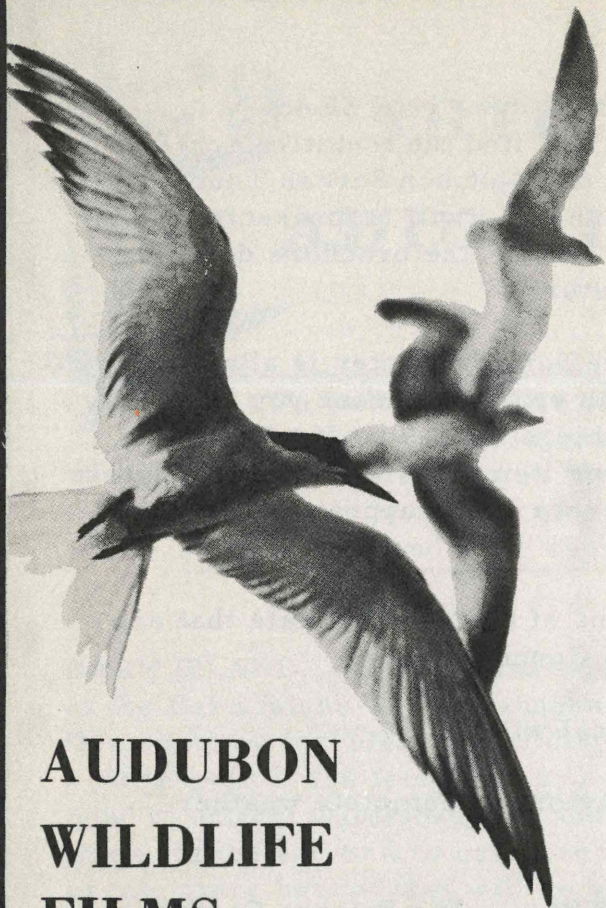
On the following page you will find the tentative schedule and ticket information for the Audubon Screen Tours, which we are pleased to announce will be presented again this year. Members will be sent the brochure detailing the program in the near future.

THINGS WE NEED.... The Science Center is always looking for certain items which you or someone you know may have. Below is a list of things we need. If you know of anyone who has any of these items and would like to donate them to the Science Center we would appreciate you calling us at 443-4295.

1. Any mounted specimens of birds or animals that are native to southeastern Connecticut.
2. Any color slides of local wildlife.
3. A Weatherscope by Taylor - a complete weather station.

NOTE TO PHOTOGRAPHERS.... The Science Center is looking for any black-and-white photographs of plants or animals to be used in our newsletter. If you have any or know of someone who does and would like to have the pictures used in the newsletter with proper credit to the photographer, contact the Science Center at 443-4295.

MOVING TO A NEW ADDRESS???? If you are planning to move in the near future and are a member of the Science Center, we would appreciate it if you would let us know of your address change. If you do not, it costs us 10¢ for every newsletter that is returned to us.....



## AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS

presented in  
NEW LONDON, CONNECTICUT  
by  
The Thames Science Center, Inc.  
and the  
National Audubon Society

at

**Clarke Center**  
**Mitchell College**  
**New London, Conn.**

**3:00 P.M.**

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

October 20.....  
Walter H. Berlet  
NORTHWEST TO ALASKA

November 24.....  
C. P. Lyons  
MEXICAN ADVENTURE

January 26.....  
Wilfred E. Gray  
FOUR SEASONS

March 30.....  
Albert J. Wool  
RANCH AND RANGE

April 27.....  
Buzz Moss  
MULE DEER COUNTRY

### SEASON TICKETS

(5 Audubon Wildlife Films)

To Members of the  
Center:

Adult.....\$6.00

Student.....\$3.00

Non-members:

Adult.....\$8.00

Student.....\$4.00

NO SINGLE PERFORM-  
ANCE TICKETS WILL  
BE AVAILABLE.



# FIELD NOTES

May 15 - June 15

A warmer spring than last year resulted in plants flowering one to two weeks earlier than last year. The spring bird migration was quite below par this year, with only one real "wave" of migrants passing through the area.

East Haddam: On May 25th at Devil's Hopyard State Park a rare ACADIAN FLYCATCHER was seen and heard along with a WORM-EATING WARBLER and a LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH.

Waterford and New London: In the Arboretum, the first MOUNTAIN LAUREL flowers opened on June 3rd compared to a first opening date of June 14th last year. HAWKWEEDS flowered on June 1st, DAISIES on the 3rd and SHEEP LAUREL on the 10th. FIREFLIES were seen on the 14th.

The one wave of migrant birds that came through this spring did so on the foggy morning of May 17th. The trees at Magonk Point, Harkness Park and the Arboretum were filled with birds. Seventeen species of warblers were recorded and included the CAPE MAY, WILSON'S, BAY-BREASTED, BLACKBURNIAN, BLACK-POLL and MAGNOLIA. A remarkable bird that is still present at this writing is a WINTER WREN, which is located in a wooded area off Great Neck Road and sings daily. The bird should be nesting far north of here or on a mountain top. At Harkness Park the two BUFFLEHEADS and the female GOLDENEYE disappeared on May 28th. A rare female WILSON'S PHALAROPE was present on the 25th and an ALDER FLYCATCHER was singing there June 11th. The WOOD PEWEE was first recorded at

Mary Butler Drive on May 24th and the first SWAINSON'S THRUSH was present at Magonk Point on the 20th. Nesting birds at Mary Butler Drive this summer include two pairs of ROBINS with 1 and 3 babies respectively, a pair of BLUEBIRDS with 5 babies, a pair of PHOEBES with 4 babies and HOUSE WRENS with 5 eggs. In the Arboretum a CAROLINA WREN was present on May 25th and a BARRED OWL was seen there on June 6th. A YELLOW-BREASTED CHAT was calling in the field at the western boundary of the Arboretum on June 10th and may be nesting. A male SUMMER TANAGER was seen at a feeder on Shore Road on June 12 - a very rare bird in this area. The latest migrant warbler reported was a BLACKPOLL still in the Arboretum on June 6th.

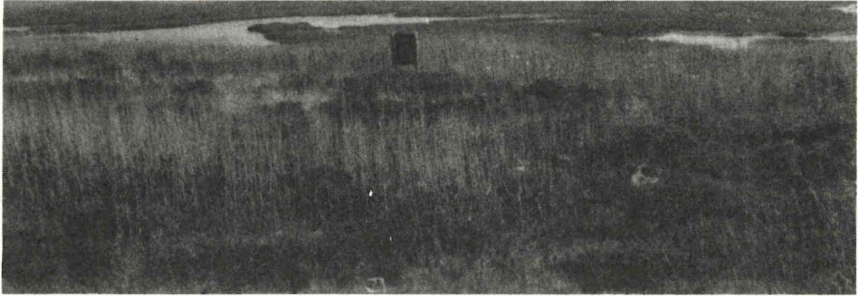
Stonington and Rhode Island Shoreline: Barn Island was quite productive during this period with the following highlights. The LEAST BITTERN was first seen on June 5th. CLAPPER and VIRGINIA RAILS were present on the 4th and 7th respectively. A COOT was seen on the 3rd and 3 GRASSHOPPER SPARROWS were singing in the large field at the eastern end of Barn Island. Two pairs of CANADA GEESE have stayed and may nest here. A BLACK TERN was present on a small pond behind the Arwood Company on May 17th. In Rhode Island a WILSON'S PHALAROPE was seen at Galilee on May 19th where two WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS were present on June 12th. A NIGHTHAWK was sitting on the beach at Napatree Point on May 18th.

Contributors to this column were: Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Bates, Grace Bissell, Lawrence Brooks, Greg Butcher, Carol Chappell, Robert Dewire, Jim and Robin Kearney, Jack Kinsey, Richard Noss and Mary Jean Williams.

# YOUR OWN FAMILY JAUNT

by BOB DEWIRE

## Galilee, Rhode Island



July, like June, is a month in which there is relatively little activity in most places. Young birds may be found throughout wooded areas, but there are no new species arriving yet. There is one group of birds, however, the shorebirds, in which many individuals have migrated north to their nesting grounds in Canada, raised a family and are already on their way south. These remarkable birds will begin passing through our area on the fall migration by the end of the first week in July! The migration improves as the month goes on and reaches a peak in late August - early Sept. For the bird watcher who wants to pick up some first arriving "fall" migrants in July, the shore is the place to go.

The best area to visit at this time is the mud flat and salt marsh at Galilee, R.I., just west of Narragansett Bay. You may reach this area by taking Route 1 out of Westerly and then taking the Point Judith exit. Go right from the exit ramp on Route 108 and continue on this road until you reach a right turn with a sign saying Galilee. A short distance down this road you will come out to an area overlooking a mud flat on the right side of the road and a salt marsh on the left.



At low tide the mudflats become very extensive and large numbers of shorebirds gather to feed. Among the common species will be ringed and black-bellied plovers, greater yellowlegs, dowitchers, least and semipalmated sandpipers. Least and common terns are regularly seen sitting and flying over the water.

The salt marsh area on the other side of the road is a series of ditches and pools surrounded by marsh grasses with a lot of phragmites at the western end. The three nesting species of shorebirds may be seen here - often with young. These are the killdeer, piping plover and the spotted sandpiper. Shorebirds of many species will congregate around the ponds and such interesting species as lesser yellowlegs, stilt, pectoral, and white-rumped sandpipers may be found in addition to those already mentioned.

In addition to shorebirds there are several other things to look for. Both blue-wing and green-wing teal are nesters in the marsh and can be seen often with young. The two salt marsh sparrows - the sharp-tailed and seaside - also nest and often fly up in front of you as you walk through the grass. Herons present would include the common and snowy egrets and the black-crowned night heron. Rails are also present, but are very shy and elusive and it is luck to see one. The sora and clapper rail are the common ones there. Tree, bank and barn swallows fly constantly over the marsh catching insects.

Marsh plants are varied and interesting and include the glasswort, marsh fleabane, beach pea and sea lavender.

Galilee, though some distance from the New London area is a place worth visiting and if you want to start the fall migration off early, then by all means visit this area.

# ACTIVITIES FOR JULY

The Science Center will be conducting its regular summer nature study day camp program during the months of July and August.

In addition, during the month of July the Center will conduct 5 evening nature jaunts on Wednesdays. The locations are as follows:

July 3 -- 6:30 P.M. -- Harkness State Park. An evening trip to this park is the most popular trip that we offer. The beach, salt marsh and fields will be explored. Meet at the Harkness Parking Lot.

July 10 -- 6:30 P.M. -- Barn Island. Perhaps the greatest variety of wildlife to be found in the state exists at Barn Island. There is always something of interest to see on this trip. Meet at the State Boat Landing at Barn Island.

July 17 -- 6:45 P.M. -- Meadowoods Natural Area. This is a beautiful piece of woodland in Essex that was recently given to the Nature Conservancy by Mr. and Mrs. Earl Canfield. Join us to see what this new area is like. A car caravan will leave the Center at 6:00 P.M. and meet at the corner of Denison Ave. and River Road in Essex at 6:45.

July 24 -- 6:30 P.M. -- Peace Sanctuary. A trip into this property to see what plants, birds and animals we can find. Meet at the sanctuary entrance.

July 31 -- 6:30 P.M. -- Harkness State Park. A repeat trip to Harkness to see the wildlife that is there in the summer. Meet at the Harkness Parking Lot.

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THE THAMES SCIENCE CENTER

Your Family Nature Center--Serving Southeastern Connecticut



THAMES SCIENCE CENTER

622 Williams Street

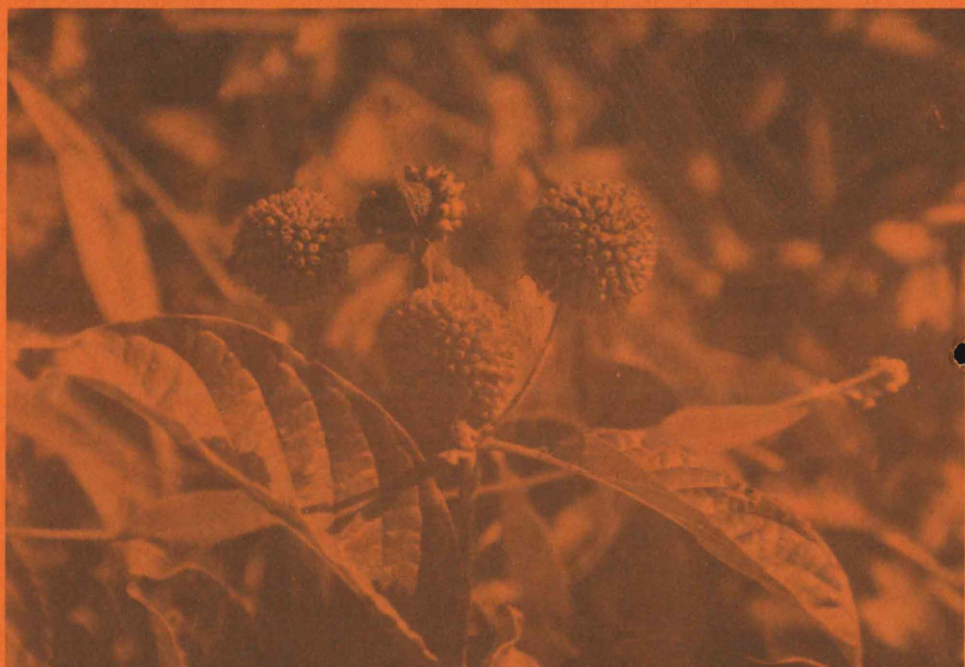
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Buttonbush in Arboretum